

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method for manufacturing frozen or refrigerated half-boiled noodles, comprising the steps of:

boiling a measured quantity of beta noodles into a half-boiled state, in which a moisture content of the half-boiled noodles is within a range of 45 to 60 percent as a whole, until outside surfaces of the beta noodles are processed into an outer alpha layer;

packing the half-boiled noodles, immediately after the boiling the noodles, in a sealed container comprising a food bag made of synthetic resin to hold the half-boiled noodles in a hermetically sealed condition to bring the sealed container into a substantially saturated steamy condition;

slow-cooling the sealed noodles to permeate moisture from the outer alpha layer of the half-boiled noodles into an inside beta part of the half-boiled noodles and to equalize a moisture content; and

preserving the slow-cooled noodles in freezing or refrigerative storage.

Claims 2 and 3 (Cancelled).

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): A method for manufacturing frozen or refrigerated half-boiled noodles according to claim 1, wherein

the half-boiled noodles are brought into the hermetically sealed condition when the temperature of a greater part of the half-boiled noodles, except an outside, is at least 80°C.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): A method for manufacturing frozen or refrigerated half-boiled noodles according to Claims 1 or 4, wherein

a slow-cooling speed of the sealed noodles is 1 to 5°C/min and a slow-cooling time is 15 to 90 minutes.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): A method for manufacturing frozen or refrigerated half-boiled noodles according to Claim 1, wherein the preserving comprises:

locating the half-boiled noodles in the hermetically sealed condition in a packaging container for freezing or refrigerative storage within 90 minutes after a start of the slow-cooling.

Claim 7 (Withdrawn): An apparatus for manufacturing frozen or refrigerated half-boiled noodles, comprising:

a weighing unit for weighing beta noodles including dried noodles or uncooked noodles in a unit quantity of package;

a boiler for boiling the beta noodles into a half-boiled state in which the moisture content is within the range of 45 to 60 percent to preprocess the surface thereof into alpha;

a wrapping unit for hermetically sealing the noodles boiled by the boiler into a sealed container of which the interior is in a substantially saturated steamy condition;

a slow-cooling unit for slow-cooling the noodles wrapped by the wrapping unit at a cooling speed of 1 to 5°C/min until the moisture permeates into the core of the noodles; and

a storage unit for preserving the slow-cooled noodles in frozen or refrigerated storage.